



Backflow Prevention Industry Position Paper:

Backflow Prevention Methods and Frequency of Testing

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This position paper is presented as a united effort with the organizations listed below to enhance the safety of the drinking water and quality of cross connection control and backflow prevention programs throughout the world. We, the undersigned believe proper backflow prevention methods and field-testing are critical components of effective cross connection control programs. To further this goal we endorse and recommend the following as best industry practices for backflow prevention methods and frequency of testing.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS:

American Backflow Prevention Association (ABPA), ASSE International (ASSE), International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO), IAPMO Backflow Prevention Institute (IAPMO BPI) and Backflow Prevention Manufacturers Association (BPMA).

COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL APPLICATIONS:

It is universally accepted that backflow protection is required for commercial applications that pose a hazard to the public water supply. A common misconception is that residential applications do not pose this same hazard. Hydraulically water acts and reacts identically in commercial and residential applications.

Residential irrigation systems have the same inherent dangers (i.e. fertilizer, pesticide, animal feces, etc.) as a commercial irrigation system and should maintain similar levels of backflow protection. Irrigation sprinkler systems for residential applications and for commercial application is the same basic piping, valves, and outlets. The installation of approved, code specified, backflow prevention commensurate with the degree of hazard remains the same for both commercial and residential applications.

SYSTEM MAINTENANCE AND TESTING IS CRUCIAL IN MAINTAINING PUBLIC HEALTH SAFETY:

All mechanical devices are subject to failure due to age, wear, damage, accidents, and corrosion. The associations listed in this position paper support regular field-testing and maintenance of backflow prevention assemblies to ensure their proper operation thereby protecting public health and the water supply. As with any mechanical device, regular maintenance and testing will extend the life of the assembly and help prevent unnecessary replacement. The listed associations concur with various manufacturers' recommended practice of field-testing all backflow prevention assemblies upon installation, after repairs, and annually thereafter. This practice is consistent with the adopted Building and Plumbing Codes used in the United States and Canada.

Historically, backflow prevention was in response to illness from waterborne contaminants. Reducing the requirements for cross connection control programs is the equivalent of removing a traffic signal from a busy intersection because there are no longer traffic accidents.